



COVID Planning for Rural Hospitals

COVID-19 can be devastating for all patient populations.

The recommendations here may seem aggressive, but they are truly necessary to protect your patients and your staff.

Consider formally completing CDC's [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Preparedness Checklist](#)

Implementing checklists reduce errors and provide actionable items.

They allow everyone to see the same messaging and resources and helps to reassure patients and their families that their caregivers have planned for what to do in difficult situations.

Below are other items that will be helpful to review and develop a process around:

Establish a structure for planning and decision making:

- Walk through elements of a written COVID-19 plan
- Identify education and training for staff members
- Evaluate PPE supplies
- Monitor staff for symptoms
- Establish what your surge capacities are

Planning steps to take now:

- Designate a person or team to monitor for COVID-19 updates daily
- Evaluate your environmental services
- Rapidly identify, isolate, and test ill patients
- Monitor vital sign more frequently
- Set up management of those with symptoms or who require a higher level of care
- Restrict any visitors unless very specific circumstances
- Restrict entry of nonessential staff
- Consider active monitor of staff as they come to work
- Close any common areas
- Take stock of your supplies of PPE

Environmental Cleaning:

- Evaluate and update you cleaning products
- Ensure that your facility has access to EPA-registered healthcare disinfectants that have qualified as having activity against SARS-CoV-2 (virus that causes COVID-19).
- If cleaning services are contracted, make sure those employees are aware of this requirement.
- Clean high-touch surfaces **multiple times per day:**
 - Bed rails
 - Doorknobs
 - Drawer handles
 - Light switches
 - Bathrooms
- Environmental service workers/personnel should gown and glove before performing terminal cleaning (eye protection if splashes anticipated).

PPE shortages:

All healthcare facilities experiencing shortages are urged to work with regional healthcare coalitions (RHC), who work with the Emergency Preparedness Program The Department of Health HAI Program does not have PPE available, but can help work through conservation strategies

Environment Measures:

Air exchanges/hour: the number of times that air enters and exits a room via HVAC system in one hour.

Different healthcare environments have different minimum air exchanges/hour.

Standard: 6

AIIR (negative pressure room): 12

Portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) units may be used to provide additional air exchanges

***Please consult with your facilities manager(s) and infection preventionist team for more specific information and before making any adjustments to your system**

Emory University COVID 19 conserving PPE

Emory University has developed helpful resources, [available on their website](#), such as printable flyers on donning, doffing, and appropriately reusing PPE. You can also find videos for training purposes.

Please visit [THA COVID Website](#) for additional resources from other hospitals and health systems such as patient transfers, visitation guidance's, and other resources.